

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please cancel Claims 29 and 32 without prejudice.

Please amend the claims to read as follows. Additions are underlined; deletions are in ~~strikeout~~ text.

1. (Original) A hand-held flossing device, comprising:

a housing having a handle portion and a head portion, the housing supporting a floss supply comprising a floss, a floss path, a floss advancement mechanism configured to selectively advance floss from the floss supply and through the path, and a stop mechanism configured to selectively engage at least a portion of the floss to resist advancement of the floss upon actuation of the advancement mechanism so that a tension is imparted to the floss between the stop mechanism and the advancement mechanism;

the floss comprising a first surface coating comprising a water soluble material and a second surface coating comprising a generally non-water soluble material, the second coating substantially encapsulating the first coating.

2. (Original) The hand-held flossing device of Claim 1, wherein the first coating comprises a multi-wax, and the second coating comprises beeswax.

3. (Currently Amended) A hand-held flossing device, comprising:

a housing having a handle portion and a head portion;

a series of ratchet receiver members integrally formed with a wall of the housing;

a floss supply comprising a floss; and

a floss supply path defined within the housing between the floss supply and a floss exit formed in the head portion, a floss return path defined within the housing between a floss entrance and an advancement mechanism, a wall disposed between the floss supply path and the floss return path in the housing head portion, floss being directed through the floss supply and return paths, the floss exiting through the exit and reentering through the entrance, an exposed floss portion extending between the exit and entrance;

wherein the advancement mechanism is configured to selectively advance floss from the supply and through the supply and return paths, and the advancement mechanism comprises a ratcheting member adapted to engage the series of ratcheting receiver members that are integrally formed with the wall of the housing, the ratcheting

member being biased outwardly and hinged so that the ratcheting member is moveable over the receiver members only in a first direction and not in a second, generally opposite direction.

4. (Currently Amended) The flossing device of Claim 3, wherein the advancement mechanism comprises a rotatable member having an axle about which floss from the return path is wound, a wheel that rotates with the axle, a portion of the wheel accessible from outside of the housing, and wherein the ratcheting member is disposed on the wheel and is biased outwardly from the wheel.

5. (Currently Amended) The flossing device of Claim 4, wherein the rotatable member comprises a guard that extends radially outward from the axle and rotates with the axle, the guard being spaced from disposed on a side of the axle opposite the wheel, and wherein the floss from the return path is wound about the axle between the wheel and the guard.

6. (Currently Amended) The flossing device of Claim 5, wherein the rotatable member is disposed in the handle forwardly of the floss supply, and the floss supply path extends past the rotatable member on a side of the guard opposite the wheel so that the guard is interposed between the floss supply path and the return path floss that is wound about the axle.

7. (Currently Amended) The flossing device of Claim 4, wherein a return path minimum width is the least distance between opposing walls defining the return path along the length of the return path, a supply path minimum width is the least distance between opposing walls defining the supply path along the length of the supply path, and the return path has a greater minimum width along its length is greater than the supply path minimum width.

8. (Original) The flossing device of Claim 4 additionally comprising a stop mechanism disposed in the supply path between the floss supply and the advancement mechanism, the stop mechanism configured to selectively prevent advancement of the floss.

9. (Original) The flossing device of Claim 8, wherein the stop mechanism comprises a friction lock, and the friction lock and advancement member are configured so that a user can selectively apply between about 0-15 pounds of tension to floss between the stop mechanism and the advancement mechanism.

10. (Original) The flossing device of Claim 9, wherein the user can selectively apply between about 0-10 pounds of tension to the floss, and the stop mechanism and advancement mechanism are actuatable by one of the user's hands holding the device.

11. (Original) The flossing device of Claim 9, wherein the friction lock comprises a movable member and a stationary member, wherein the floss is selectively pinched between the movable and stationary members, and the stationary member comprises a truss configured to prevent substantial deflection when the movable member engages the stationary member.

12 - 20. Cancelled

21. (Currently Amended) The flossing device of Claim 33, wherein the stop mechanism has a maximum tension limit, and the stop mechanism is configured so that if tension in the floss exceeds the maximum tension limit, the floss will slip relative to the stop mechanism.

22. (Original) The flossing device of Claim 21, wherein the floss has a yield strength greater than the maximum tension limit.

23. (Original) The flossing device of Claim 22, wherein the floss has a yield strength greater than about 20 pounds.

24. (Original) The flossing device of Claim 23, wherein the maximum tension limit is less than about 15 pounds.

25-27. Cancelled

28. (Currently Amended) A hand-held flossing device, comprising:

a housing having a handle portion, and a head portion, and a longitudinal axis, the housing having an outer wall extending circumferentially about the longitudinal axis;

a floss supply comprising a floss;

a floss supply path defined within the housing between the floss supply and a floss exit formed in the head portion; and

a floss return path defined within the housing between a floss entrance and an advancement mechanism, the advancement mechanism configured to selectively advance floss from the floss supply and through the supply and return paths; and

a stop mechanism interposed between the floss supply and floss exist, the stop mechanism comprising a front stop wall, a rear stop wall, and a stop member, the stop member selectively movable between a first position and a second position, wherein in

the first position the stop member redirects the floss so that the floss is pinched between the front stop wall and the rear stop wall so as to apply a friction force resisting floss movement, and in the second position the stop member allows the floss to move past without restrictive friction;

wherein the housing is arranged and configured so that at least one of the front and rear stop walls is part of ~~to include~~ an enclosed truss structure, the truss structure comprising at least two ribs that extend generally transversely and longitudinally from the corresponding stop wall, and the truss structure being enclosed within the housing outer wall.

29. Cancelled

30. (Currently Amended) The flossing device of Claim 2928, wherein the device is made of a polymer, and the truss structure and polymer are configured so that if the head of the flossing device is bent up to about 45°, the structural integrity of the floss supply and return paths is preserved.

31. (Previously Presented) The hand-held flossing device of Claim 2, wherein the first coating is deposited directly on the floss.

32. Cancelled

33. (Currently Amended) The hand-held flossing device of Claim 3228, wherein each of the front and rear stop walls is part of an enclosed a-truss structure, a front stop truss structure comprising the front stop wall and at least two ribs that extend generally forwardly from the front stop wall, a rear stop struss structure comprising the rear stop wall and at least two ribs that extend generally rearwardly from the rear stop wall ~~is disposed forwardly and rearwardly of the stop mechanism.~~

34. (Currently Amended) The flossing device of Claim 4, wherein the ratchet receiver members are integrally formed on a wall of the housing that is generally transverse to a longitudinal axis of the rotatable member axle ~~and are arranged in a generally circular array~~, and the ratcheting member on the wheel engages the ratchet receiver members

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Please add the following new claims:

35. (New) The flossing device of Claim 34, wherein the ratcheting member comprises a pawl extending from a side surface of the wheel.

36. (New) A hand-held flossing device, comprising:

a housing having a handle portion and a head portion;

a floss supply comprising a floss, the floss supply disposed in the handle portion;

an advancement mechanism supported by the housing and interposed between the floss supply and the head portion;

a floss supply path defined within the housing between the floss supply and a floss exit formed in the head portion, a floss return path defined within the housing between a floss entrance and the advancement mechanism, a divider wall disposed between the floss supply path and the floss return path in the housing head portion;

wherein the device is configured so that floss is directed from the floss supply through the floss supply path to the exit and reenters through the entrance so that an exposed floss portion extends between the exit and entrance, and wherein floss is further directed along the return path from the entrance to the advancement mechanism;

wherein the advancement mechanism comprises an axle rotatably supported by the housing, a wheel that extends radially from the axle and rotates with the axle, and a guard that extends radially from the axle and rotates with the axle, a space being disposed between the wheel and the guard, floss from the return path being wound about the axle in the space between the wheel and the guard so that selective rotation of the wheel selectively advances floss from the floss supply through the supply and return paths and to the advancement mechanism; and

wherein the floss supply path is arranged in the housing so as to pass by the advancement mechanism on a side of the guard opposite the wheel so that the guard is interposed between the floss supply path and the return path floss that is wound about the axle.

37. (New) The flossing device of Claim 35, wherein the floss supply path is arranged so as to pass between the guard and a first side wall of the housing.

38. (New) The flossing device of Claim 37, wherein the advancement mechanism comprises a ratcheting member configured to allow rotation of the axle in only a first rotational direction.

39. (New) The flossing device of Claim 38, wherein a plurality of ratchet receiver members are integrally formed with a second side wall of the housing and are arranged in a generally circular array, the second side wall being generally opposite the first side wall, and the wheel comprises a ratcheting member that is biased outwardly from the wheel and hinged relative to the wheel so that the ratcheting member is moveable over the receiver members when the wheel is rotated in the first rotational direction.

40. (New) The flossing device of Claim 38, wherein the floss supply path is defined between the divider wall and a first wall opposite the divider wall, and the floss return path is defined between the divider wall and a second wall opposite the divider wall, a minimum supply path width is defined as the minimum distance between the divider wall and the first wall along the length of the floss supply path, and a minimum return path width is defined as the minimum distance between the divider wall and the second wall along the length of the floss return path, wherein the minimum return path width is greater than the minimum supply path width.